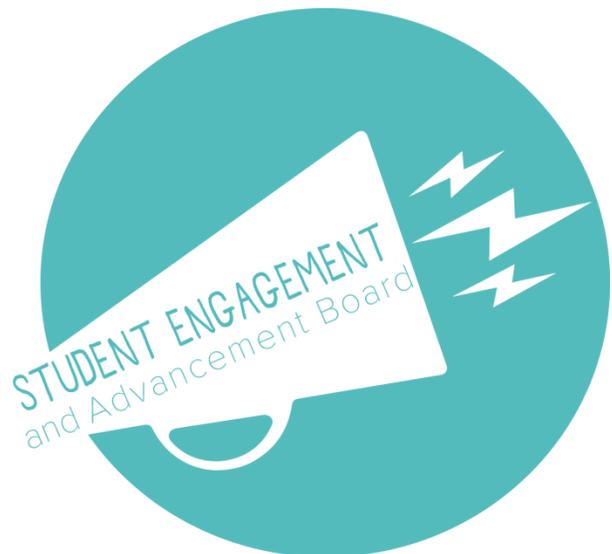**Facilitation Guide**
for

THRIVE:
Creating
Inclusive Schools

Facilitator Preparation

Welcome

We, the members of the St. Paul Public Schools Student Engagement and Advancement Board (SEAB), are excited that you have chosen to use this tool in your work. We hope that it will advance your current goals of increasing equity and inclusivity.

You can find more information on SEAB at spps.org/seab

Description

Thrive: Creating Inclusive Schools brings forth the voices of students on inclusive experiences in their schools. Students share how unchecked and unchallenged microaggressions have contributed to feelings of exclusivity, impeding their overall ability to thrive academically, mentally and socially in school. The video further describes how microaggressions can be institutionalized through policy. It ends with a set of suggested solutions developed to increase the feel of inclusivity, but also states that this is not a complete list of what an individual or system can do to improve.

By listening to these stories, participants in this facilitation will be encouraged to challenge their perceptions on their contributions to students' classroom experiences and take concrete action to create a space where all students feel that they can thrive.

Objectives

This facilitation will lead participants through a *Listen, Learn and Lead* process in which they will be challenged to:
- *Listen* and open up to new perspectives and experiences (in the video and during group reflection) regarding microaggressions. Develop empathy for the experience of others and connections to personal experiences. Engage in conversations that may challenge previous assumptions.
- *Learn* and understand how microaggressions, practice and policy can impede a student's ability to perform and thrive at their greatest potential. Understand that increasing inclusivity positively impacts everyone and thus understand that each of us has a role to play in increasing inclusive spaces where everyone can thrive.
- *Lead* by committing to ongoing learning and implementing changes in their role that help shape and support youth through inclusion.

Target Audience

This video and facilitation guide is intended for groups, organizations and people interested in building inclusive communities through dialogue and discussion about microaggressions. For training purposes, the content and process offered by this facilitation should be applicable in most school districts.

Background

From a district-wide student survey and a series of focus groups intended to gather student perspectives on inclusivity in schools, various narratives regarding experiences of unchecked and unchallenged microaggressions in classrooms surfaced, and students shared how these experiences made them feel less engaged and excluded from curriculum.

In reality however, these barriers are not just problems within a singular school district, but rather are societal issues reflected in schools. These experiences occur in the workplace as well as other community settings.

While leadership in schools, communities and workplaces may propose excellent ideas or progressive policies to address these barriers, they often become lost on the road to implementation. As such, this video and guide will act to facilitate authentic listening and learning on this topic as well as display solutions that may help to increase inclusivity in any given environment.

Tips for Facilitating

Facilitators should focus discussions on thoughts that affect inclusion, respect and valuing others. Encourage participants to be honest and reflective as well as to be open to the thoughts of others in group discussions.

Materials and Equipment Needed
- Video: *Thrive: Creating Inclusive Schools*
  Found at: https://www.spps.org/Domain/13117
- Any form of media capable of displaying the video (i.e. laptop or video projector with screen)
- Optional Powerpoint: https://www.spps.org/Domain/13117
- Cards or slips of paper for "primer activity"
- Markers or other writing instruments
- Facilitator Guide

Time Requirements
- Introduction: 5 minutes
- Primer Activity: 3 minutes
- *Video:* 14:34 minute runtime
- Discussion Time: 30-40 minutes

Facilitation

1 – Introduction (3-5 minutes)
Start by pulling up the accompanying powerpoint. If you are a part of SPPS, please begin with a brief intro of SEAB. As simple as: "Our Student Engagement and Advancement Board exists to amplify student voice at the Board and Administrative levels and be our partners in creating an even more wonderful district."

"Thank you for participating in this facilitation today. Today, you will be watching and participating in a group discussion and reflection on inclusive school environments. It starts with acknowledging what it means for an environment to be inclusive."
Pull up graphic differentiating inclusivity, equity and equality.

"The image in the upper left corner represents **equality**. Each person has the same size box. Even with equal amount of support, not everyone can see over the fence. In the **equity** image, each person receives the support they need. They can all see over the fence because the boxes are fitted to their individual needs.
Inclusivity is a step further. It is systems change to include those who might otherwise be marginalized. It asks: "why have the fence at all?", "who are we making change for?" and "who are we still leaving out?"

The equity image here, maintains the belief that lack of success in a system is based on the deficits of students – they need boxes to see over the fence. It further assumes that there is no issue with the policy, structure or curriculum that might make up the fence. In inclusive environments, we identify and dismantle unnecessary barriers before they impede student success. Thus, inclusivity requires **changes** in policy and practice.
(note: the above images and explanation of inclusivity are taken from the SEAB presentation to the BOE on 12/13/17 and is available online at: https://www.spps.org/Domain/9493)

It should be noted that while the stories in the video stem from real student experiences, the barriers discussed in each story are not just reflect problems within a singular school district, but rather are greater societal issues that are reflected in schools. These experiences occur in workplaces as well as other community settings."

Optional for use in a school setting:
"All of us work in this district because of a shared desire to do what's best for students. I/We hope you'll be our partners in taking action to making our district a place that addresses these societal barriers head on, to continue & strive for us to be the best place for students and staff we can be."

End with telling people why you are inviting them into this process. Something like: "My goal for our school/program/org in using this video is: _____"

2 - Primer Activity (3-5 minutes)
Have cards or slips of paper as well as writing utensils available to participants. Instruct participants to begin by writing a word or a phrase of action describing what someone else has done that has made them feel like they belong. Give participants 2-3 minutes to do so.

**Write a word or a phrase
that describes something someone else
has done to
make you feel like you belong**

Have participants hold up what they have written and look at what others have written. Have participants take note of similarities and differences in what is written on the cards. This activity will allow participants to become cognizant of the fact that the content of the following video is not only applicable to the well-being of students in the classroom, but is also important to anyone to feel belonging in their respective workplaces and communities.

3 - Play Video (14:34 minute runtime)

4 - Group Discussion

Connect

For larger audiences (more than 10 people), divide participants into smaller groups for discussions. Ideally, participants sit at round tables to facilitate more connected dialogue. Have participants introduce themselves by sharing their name, position (if applicable), and preferred pronoun. Bring participants back to the "primer activity" by having participants in the same group share with one another what they've written on their slips of paper/cards.

Discuss

Have the following questions posted somewhere visible to all participants (i.e. projected on a slide or printed out and taped onto each table).

In Your Table Group

LISTEN and LEARN
1. Share your name, position, preferred pronoun and your belonging word
2. Talk about something in the video that didn't surprise you because you have experienced or witnessed it yourself
3. Describe how your perspective on inclusivity shifted

LEAD
1. Discuss things that you can adopt into practice in your role to increase inclusivity

Facilitator(s) should read questions aloud one by one and provide participants with roughly 3 minutes of thinking and response time after each question is asked. As each question is asked, facilitators should "float around" and take notes on things they hear in the conversations.

- *Listen and Learn*
    1. Talk about something that didn't surprise you because you have experienced or witnessed it yourself- whether it be in an work environment or in your everyday life.
    2. How has your perspective on inclusivity shifted? (i.e. how has it shifted the way inclusivity **looks** and **feels** like to you?)
- *Lead*
    3. Whether or not you interact with students (as a part of your job), discuss things that you can adopt into practice in your role that increase inclusivity. (Think about the other roles you may occupy in your life i.e. as a parent/community member)

*Note: The wording of these questions as they are read aloud may differ from how they may appear posted-- this allows for greater clarification to the participants.

5 – Large Group Reflection
  ● *Lead continued*

Conclude the session by sharing notes taken during the smaller group discussions with larger group. Invite participants to share their thoughts and observations with the larger group. Encourage participants to become engaged in an "action commitment" that mirrors their response in discussion question 3 and encourage them to use social media (such as Twitter) to share how they will commit to using the video and guide.

Final Step
Tell us how you used this tool!
Email us at seab@spps.org